What Is Admadiyyat ?

QUESTION ANSWERED BY THE
HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA
COMMUNITY

1811

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WHAT IS AHMADIYYAT ?

The question—What is Ahmadiyyat ? —is answered authoritatively in the following pages by the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Amir-ul-Mominin Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad. The answer is the subject-matter of a lecture prepared by him at the request of the Jamaat Ahmadiyya at Sialkot.

The lecture clears several misunderstandings about Ahmadiyyat but its central theme is the question—Why have Ahmadis organised themselves into a separate Community or Jama'at, when they believe and act in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Quran and the example of the Holy Prophet and when their missionary zeal, activities and

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sacrifices are devoted to the promotion and propagation of Islam ? The answer is—Only thus could A h m a d i s have created that nucleus of unity between Muslims in different parts of the world and that community of selfless workers which are n e c s s a r y today for the religious revival of Muslims all over the world and the spirtual conquest of the modern world by Isla m.

Mirza Wasim Ahmad,

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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WHAT IS AHMADIYYAT AND WHAT ARE ITS AIMS AND OBJECTS ?

Many who ask this question speak with some knowledge. The points they raise are interesting and new. But many who ask the question speak with little or no knowledge. They invent their own answers to it, or seem ready to believe anything they hear from others. I should like first to deal with the misconceptions of those who speak with little knowledge of Ahmadiyyat.

NOT A NEW RELIGION.

One misconception they suffer from is that Ahmadis do not believe in the Muslim Kalima or creed : *La ilaha illallahu Muhammad ul-Rasulullah* (there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah) and that Ahmadiyyat is a new religion. May-be they have been deliberately misled into this view. May-be, they think that as Ahmadiyyat

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is a new religion and a new religion must have a new K a l i m a , Ahmadis must have invented their own Kalima. So they think Ahmadis have dropped the Muslim Kalima and adopted a Kalima of their own. The truth, however, is that Ahmadiyyat is not a new religion, nor must every religion have a Kalima. My view in this regard is that no religion other than Islam possesses a Kalima. Islam is distinguished by its Book, its Prophet and its Message, a message of undoubted universality. Islam is also distinguished by its Kalima. It is also distinguished by the fact that although other religions have their Holy Books, none of these books can be said to be the very word of God. A holy book may be holy because of its subject-matter. It may be held sacred by its followers. Its injunctions and ordinances may be divine. Yet its text or words may not be divine. Its subject-matter may be r e v e a l e d,

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but not the words in which that subject-matter is communicated. The Holy Book of Islam is quite different. Its divine name is Kalam'ullah or the word of God. That is, not only its subject-matter but every word in which this subject-matter is recorded is a revelation from God. The book of Moses contained revealed subject-matter. What Jesus preached had also been revealed. But Moses and Jesus used their own words for the presentation of the messages they received from heaven. The point will be conceded by any casual reader of the Old and New Testaments and of the Quran. The general style of the two Testaments leaves no doubt that the subject-matter which they contain is revealed, but not necessarily the words, the text in which the subject-matter is expressed. The Quran, on the other hand, strikes everybody as being very different. Not only its subject-matter but its very

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words strike one as revelation. I would say : Let the three books be examined cursorily by one who does not believe in the revealed character of any. Such a reader will find at once that the writer of the Old and the New Testaments believed in the revealed character of the subject-matter of their books, but not necessarily in the revealed character of their words. His view of the Quran, however, would be very different. He would say that the 'writer' of the Quran regards not only the subject-matter, but also the words in which the subject-matter is expressed, as a revelation from God. That is why the Quran calls itself not merely the Kitab (or book) but also the Kalam (or Word) of God. Such a description is not claimed for their contents by the Old Testament or the New. Nor does the Quran describe these books as the Word of God. Muslims, therefore, are different from other religious com-

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munities in that the holy books of other religions may be called Books of God but not His Word; the holy Book of Muslims can be called not only the Book of God but also His Very Word.

So does the Prophet of Islam differ from other prophets. Every religion has a prophet, but no prophet except the Holy Prophet of Islam has presented to the world such a comprehensive teaching or such a comprehensive example for other human beings to follow. Consider Christianity, the religion nearest to Islam in historical succession. Christianity presents Jesus as the Son of God. But a Son of God is not human. He cannot serve as an example to human beings. Human beings will follow only a human example. The writers of the Old Testament do not present Moses as an exemplar to others. Nor do the Old and the New Testament present their great teachers, Moses and Jesus, as the exponents of

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religious wisdom. But the claim put forth in the Quran on behalf of the Prophet of Islam, is clear and unambiguous. The Quran describes the Prophet as :

> 'he, who teaches you *all*, the Book and the Wisdom. (2 : 152)

That is to say, Islam is distinguished because the Prophet of Islam is an ideal for all human beings, and because the Prophet does not uphold the use of force for the acceptance of his Message. He seeks to convince and to persuade by argument. He promotes faith and enthusiasm by pointing to the blessings and beauties which the teaching of Islam presents. Islam is also distinguished by its universality. Its teaching applies to all humans : high or low, rich or poor, men or women, whether of the West or the East. It applies also to all situations. You may be strong or weak, ruler or ruled, master or slave, husdand or wife,

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parent or child, buyer or seller, a neighbour in station or a companion on a journey, Islam holds something for you to learn. For all human beings in all situations Islam has a message, a message of peace and progress. Islam does not omit from its message any sections or classes of human beings. It addresses them all. It addresses those who are gone, as well as those who are still to come. The message of Islam reflects in its character the character of God. The all-seeing God sees everything, the stars on high as well as the sands below. Similarly the Muslim teaching keeps in view the needs of the richest rich as well as the poorest poor. Islam is not a replica of past teachings. It does not merely reproduce what has gone before. It completes the spiritual progression which has gone on in the past. It is the last word on a subject. It is the sun of the universe of spirit. It is not a religion among religions.

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True, there are many religions, and Islam may be just one among them all. But this community would be a community only of name. Carbon and diamond are chemically the same, but still diamond is diamond and carbon carbon. Marble and gravel also are chemically the same, but are still very different from each other. People wrongly imagine that because Islam has a Kalima, therefore every religion must have a Kalima. Nothing could be further from the truth. It seems Muslims who entertain this belief have never had the chance to read the Quran or ponder over its teachings. But Muslims have not stopped at this. They have gone on to invent Kalimas and to attribute them to well-known religious teachers such as :

La ilaha illallahu Ibrahim Khalilullah :
La ilaha illallahu Musa Kalimullah :
La ilaha illallahu Isa Ruhullah :

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These Kalimas are fabrications. To say that they are the Kalimas of the religious traditions associated with Abraham, Moses and Jesus is to indulge in sheer fancy. They are not the Kalimas of these older religions. They are not to be found in the writings of the old Testament or the New. They are not mentioned anywhere in their literatures. Muslims may have forgotten many things, but they have not forgotten their Kalima. No people can forget their Kalima. Then, have the Christians and the Jews forgotten their Kalimas ? If they have, and their Kalimas have somehow disappeared from the books, then why have not Muslims forgotten their Kalima ? The truth is that no prophet other than the Prophet of Islam ever taught a Kalima. It is one of the distinctions of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) that of all the prophets, he is the one who taught a Kalima to his followers. The distinction

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is full of signficance. In the Muslim Kalima, belief in the Holy Prophet is linked with belief in God. God is Enduring, Permanent. To believe in Him is to believe in an enduring, ineffaceable truth. The messages of earlier prophets were meant for their own times; so none of them had his name linked with the name of God. The message of the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) was to endure for all times. It was to remain unsuperseded for ever and ever. Therefore, in the Kalima of Islam, the Name and Office of Muhammad (on whom be peace) were associated with the assertion of the Oneness of God. That God is One and Ever-enduring and that Muhammad is His Prophet, are two ineffaceable truths. Neither the one nor the other can be superseded. The followers of Moses, the followers of Jesus and the followers of Abraham had no Kalimas taught to them. They attribute no such thing to

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their teachers. But Muslims out of ignorance proceed to attribute to other teachings a distinction which belongs cnly to Islam. Other religions have no Kalimas. Why should Muslims invent Kalimas for them, and share with others a distinction which belongs only to Islam ?

In short, it is not necessary that every religion should have a Kalima. Even if this were necessary, Ahmadiyyat would not have had a Kalima. For Ahmadiyyat is not a new religion. It is only another name for Islam. Its Kalima is the Kalima of Islam, the Kalima taught by the Holy Prophet Muhammad : 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.' Ahmadis hold only to this. They believe in the One God, Who created the universe, Who has no equal, Whose powers are infinite, Who sustains us all, Who is gracious in His gifts and liberal in His rewards, Who is our Maker and

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Master : Possessor of all the Beautiful Names attributed to Him in the Holy Quran and free from all defects disavowed by the Quran on His behalf. So do Ahmadis believe in Muhammad b. Abdullah b. Abdul Muttalib, the Quraishite, the Meccan (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) as the Prophet, Messenger, and Bearer of the Last Law which God gave to man. Muhammād is prophet for all human beings, Arabs or others, white, black or brown. He is the prophet of all nations and all peoples. He became a prophet as soon as he received the command from God. He will remain a prophet so long as there are human beings alive on the face of this earth. His is the only teaching for human beings to follow. No man, therefore, who receives his message and, having received the message,understands it but does not believe in it, can escape the punishment of God. All those

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who have heard of him, of his claims and of the grounds of those claims, are now under obligation to believe in him. Without believing in him, they cannot hope for salvation. The purity and virtue to which human beings aspire can be attained only by following in his footsteps.

KHATMU 'NUBUWWAT

Those who know little about Ahmadiyyat also say that Ahmadis do not believe in the Muslim doctrine of Khatmu-'Nubuwwat—the doctrine of the finality of the Holy Prophet. They think Ahmadis do not regard the Holy Prophet of Islam as *Khatam al-Nabiyyin* or the Seal of the Prophets, to use the expression sanctioned by the Quran. The allegation is false, and is most certainly the result of misconception or misinformation. Ahmadis are Muslims. Their Kalima is the Kalima of Islam. How can they deny the doctrine of Khatmu-

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'Nubuwwat or the status of the Holy Prophet of Islam as Khatam al-Nabiyyin? The Holy Quran lays down in clear terms: 'Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is a Messenger of God and Khatam al-Nabiyyin' (33 : 42). The verse is unambiguous. It affirms that the Prophet had no male issue and was not destined to have one, *but* he was a Messenger of God *and* Khatam al-Nabiyyin (to retain the Quranic description of the Prophet). Those who believe in the Quran cannot possibly omit this verse from their belief or deny the meaning which it carries. Believing in the Quran, Ahmadis cannot possibly deny that the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) was Khatam al-Nabiyyin. The only difficulty or disagreement that remains is with regard to the meaning of Khatam al-Nabiyyin. Ahmadis disagree with the meaning commonly put upon it by Muslims today. Ahmadis say that the

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meaning commonly put upon the phrase Khatam al-Nabiyyin today not only cannot be put upon it, but also fails to bring out the high station of the Prophet to which the phrase really points. The meaning of Khatam al-Nabiyyin accepted by Ahmadis is in accordance with accepted Arabic usage. It is the meaning taught by Hazrat 'A'isha, the Prophet's learned consort. It is the meaning taught by Hazrat Ali and other companions of the Holy Prophet. The insight, which this meaning affords into the high spiritual rank of the Prophet, can be had in no other way. It measures the spiritual stature of the Prophet. The Prophet is found to rise above all men. He is found to be the lord of the human race. Ahmadis, therefore, do not deny or disparage the teaching of the Quran on Khatmu-'Nubuwwat. They consider the teaching very important but think its current interpretations mistaken. They deny only these

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misinterpretations. To deny the idea of Khatmu-'Nubuwwat is Kufr and Ahmadis who claim to be Muslims and regard Islam as the only way to salvation, cannot possibly choose Kufr.

Among common misconceptions about Ahmadis is the belief that Amadis do not believe in the Quran from end to end; that they accept some parts and deny others. Many of my visitors during a stay at Quetta told me that they had heard many Maulvis say that Ahmadis did not believe in the whole of the Quran. The charge has been fabricated by the enemies of Ahmadiyyat. Ahmadis regard the Holy Quran as an unchangeable and everlasting Book of God. From the first letter of the first verse to the last letter of the last verse they regard it as the very Word of God, every point, particle or part being as certainly revealed as every other, and evey part being as obligatory as every other.

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ANGELS

Yet another misconception some people suffer from is that Ahmadis do not believe in angels or in Satan. This also is a fabrication. In the Holy Quran we have accounts of angels as well as of Satan. Ideas and beliefs taught by the Quran cannot be denied by Ahmadis. Such a thing is impossible. By the grace of God we believe and believe unreservedly in angels. We have experienced the blessings which angels bring and have become confirmed in the belief that we can even establish a sort of contact with these heavenly beings and can invoke their help in the acquisition of spiritual knowledge.

I have myself acquired much in this way. I learnt the meaning of the Surah-i-Fatiha— the opening chapter of the Quran—from an angel. Since that event in my life, I have had

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increased insight into the meaning of this short chapter. I cannot describe the variety and depth of meaning which I have found in this chapter. I have declared in public : Should a follower of any other religion cite a truth or proposition out of his holy book, then I promise to cite, out of the Surah-i-Fatiha alone, truths or propositions superior to the one cited by him. I have repeated this claim many times but nobody has dared to challenge it. The existence and oneness of God, the appearance of prophets, their need for mankind, the criteria of a perfect law, need of such a law, institution of worship, principle of *Taqdir*, judgment day, meaning of heaven and hell : all these subjects can be deduced from the Surah-i-Fatiha. What this one short chapter teaches on these and other subjects connected with the spiritual well-being of man far outweighs any thing

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that several hundred pages of other religious books can teach on the same subjects. How, then, can we deny the existence of angels? We benefit from their existence and experience their blessings. As far Satan, he is but an evil being. To believe in an evil being is no merit. But, the Holy Quran teaches about him; therefore, we believe in his existence. Not only this. We even think that God has enjoined upon true believers the duty of destroying the power of Satan. I have seen him symbolised in visions. I have even battled with him and defeated him with the help of God and with the help of His revealed guidance. In one vision I was told that in the task enjoined upon me by God I would have to confront great opposition from Satan and his followers. I was taught to use on such occasions a special invocation: 'With

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the grace and mercy of God! With the grace and mercy of God!, I was going in the direction I had been commanded to, by God. I saw Satan and his sons out to terrify me and to dissuade me from my undertaking. At places I only saw heads or headless bodies or other scenes designed to put fright in me. At other places, I only saw wild animals: lions, tigers, elephants, all manifestations of this evil being Satan intriguing to put fear in me. But under the command of God I paid no heed to them and went on invoking the prayer I had been taught—'With the grace and mercy of 'God.' At every invocation of this prayer I could see the fearful scenes disappear one by one. After a time, however, they reappeared in new form. Again, I uttered the prayer and went on doing so, until I reached my destination. I saw Satan and his forces disperse. I have never forgotten this

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vision of mine. Following the suggestion in the vision which I regard as from God, I have never issued any important statement without putting at the top the prayer 'With the grace and mercy of God, taught to me in the vision. In short, we Ahmadis believe in angels and we believe in the existence of Satan also.

It is sometimes said that Ahmadis deny miracles. This also is not true. Ahmadis believe in the miracles of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace). They also believe that true followers of the Holy Prophet can themselves show miracles. The Quran gives an account of the miracles of the Prophet and only those denuded of spiritual vision can deny this account.

QUESTION OF SALVATION

Some seem to think that according to Ahmadiyya belief everybody not an Ahmadi is destined for hell. This misconception can only be the result either

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of ignorance or of prejudice bordering on hostility. We do not believe that Ahmadis are destined to go to heaven and all others to hell. According to our belief it is possible that an Ahmadi may go to hell and a person not an Ahmadi may go to heaven. The reward of heaven cannot be won through verbal professions but through good works, through duties well performed and obligations properly fulfilled. On the other hand, nobody can go to hell unless his obligations for belief and action have been made quite clear to him. He may be a denier of the most important truths in the world, yet he cannot merit hell unless he has had the way to heaven and hell fully explained to him. Has not the Holy Prophet made clear that infants who die young, adults who live in far-off hills or forests, old men who are past comprehension, and the insane who are incapable of

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understanding are not answerable before God?

On the judgment day, when such persons are raised to life again, they will have a prophet sent to them again. He will invite them to distinguish truth from falsehood and make their choice. Then those who choose falsehood and do so after due deliberation will go to hell and those who choose truth after due deliberation will go to heaven. It is wrong, therefore, to say that according to Ahmadiyya belief those who have not entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat are destined for hell. Our belief on the subject is quite clear. We believe that every one who seeks to escape the obligation to comprehend and judge truth, every-one who deliberately avoids listening to any explanation or exposition, who leaves no doubt on the point and persists in denying a truth which God has sent down for

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the guidance of man, is answerable before God. But even such a person may be forgiven if God, in His judgment, wisdom and mercy chooses to do so. The mercy of God is administered by God, not by us. We are his servants. We cannot ask Him to give it to some and not to others. God is our Master, King, Creator, Judge and Lord. If His wisdom and knowledge choose to forgive one who seems unforgivable to us, who are we to stop Him from doing so?

Our conception of salvation is so liberal that for this alone Maulvis have charged us with *Kufr*. They cite our belief that eternal punishment is not countenanced by Islam. We do not regard this as part of the Muslim teaching. Neither believers nor unbelievers, according to us, will meet with eternal punishment. We take our stand on a verse of the Quran which says. 'My mercy encompasseth everything' (7 :157).

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and another which says, 'the unbelievers mother is hell' (101 : 10) : that is, hell will perform the merciful function of a mother. We take our stand on another verse also, which says: 'We have not created the Jinn and the Men except that they should worship God' (51 : 57) The verse teaches that even evil creatures will ultimately enter the fold of the true worshippers of God. As long as we find this verse in the Quran, how can we deny that at last God's mercy will result in the forgiveness of all sinners ? How can we say that the inmates of hell will never shed their sinful tendencies or that those who have been created to become worshippers of God will end their days as worshippers of Satan ? Will they never become the servants and worshippers of God? Will they never hear the sweet words of God beckoning them 'to enter the fold of His servants,

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and the haven of His paradise'? (89 : 30-31)

THE HADITH

It is also said that Ahmadis do not believe in the Hadith, or that they do not hold in due regard the early interpreters of the Muslim Law. Both these allegations are wrong. On the question of *taqlid* or *non-taqlid* Ahmadis occupy a middle-of-the-road position. Ahmadis believe that anything which can be attributed ultimately to the Holy Prophet must be received as the last word on any subject. To turn to anything said by anybody else is, after this, to show disrespect to the Holy Prophet. In the presence of the master it is discourteous to attend to the slave. When the founder has said his say, a follower cannot be heard. The early interpreters of law, however important and learned, can only have the status of followers of the Prophet. Whatever authority

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they have acquired in the eyes of Muslims is due to their loyalty to the Holy Prophet. If, therefore, any proposition can be shown to have been laid down by the Holy Prophet, and if that proposition is in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Quran, it must be regarded as an inescapable proposition. Nobody then has the right to deny or question it in any way. Reporters of Hadith, however, are human beings. They include men of good as well as bad character and intentions. They include possessors of good as well as bad memory and of good as well as defective understanding. If we meet with a Hadith which seems to contradict the teaching of the Quran, we certainly have the right to question it. Reports in the Hadith, therefore, are not unquestionable. The early doctors of Hadith themselves make a series of distinctions between these reports. Some they regard as valid

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and true, others as doubtful and uncertain and still otners as pure fabrications. The Holy Quran stands by itself. It is an entirely certain and valid record. A Hadith which contradicts the teaching or text of the Quran cannot be entertained. Where, however, the Quran is silent or without a clear direction and the best available Hadith on the subject happen to be less than certain or capable of several interpretations, then we certainly must turn to the early doctors of the law for guidance. The doctors of the law have spent their lives in reading, examining and pondering over the text of the Quran and the Hadith. They certainly have the right to guide those who have not applied their minds and lives to the study and contemplation of the Quran and the Hadith in the same way, and whose scholarship or judgment is not of the same order as that of the early

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doctors of the Muslim Law. An ordinary Muslim must not question the right of Imam Abu Hanifa or Imam Ahmad or Imam Shafi'i or Imam Malik or other Imams to guide him in matters about which the Quran and the Hadith happen to be silent. The principle that all Muslims have the right to interpret the Quran and the Hadith, has its limitations. Those who have devoted themselves more than others to the contemplation of the Quran and the Hadith, evidently have a superior right of consideration for their opinions. When a trained physician and a common man differ on the nature of symptoms, certainly the physician's opinion has more right to consideration than the opinion of the common man. When a legal question is in issue, a lawyer has a better right to judge than a non-lawyer. There is no reason, therefore, why we should not hold in superior deference the

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opinions of leaders of legistic thought who have spent their lives in the study of the Holy Quran and the Hadith, whose intellectual powers are far superior to those of others and whose purity of character is also beyond question. In short, on this question of *Taqlid* Ahmadis occupy a middle position. They are neither with the Ahl-i-Hadith nor with the Muqallidin. The Ahmadiyya view in this regard, is the view of Imam Abu Hanifa, who taught that the Holy Quran is superior to everything else. Next to the Holy Quran we have the valid Hadith. Next to the valid Hadith we have the opinions and deductions of authorities. Because of these, Ahmadis often call themselves Hanafis. They then mean that on the question of the authority of the Quran and the Hadith, Ahmadis follow the teaching of Imam Abu Hanifa. Quite as often Ahmadis call themselves Ahl-i-Hadith, because

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Ahmadis also hold that when a good proposition is proved to have been the utterance of the Holy Prophet, then that utterance must have priority over anything taught by any doctor of religion, however great his position.

TAQDIR

Among misunderstandings about Ahmadiyyat is one relating to *Taqdir*. It is said that Ahmadis deny the doctrine to *taqdir* (or determination). This is not true. Ahmadis believe that Divine Taqdir operates in this world and will continue to operate until Doomsday. Taqdir means law and the law of God cannot be changed by anybody. What we say, however, is that the actions of human beings can be attributed only to human beings, to those who perpetrate those actions, not to God. A theft is committed by a thief, an unrighteous action by an unrighteous person ; an intrigue results from an intriguer, a

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murder from a murderer, and impiety from impious persons. The blackness of our actions should be attributed to ourselves, not to God. We believe that God has ordained two parallel laws for the governance of this world. One is the law of *Taqdir* and the other is the law of *Tadbir*. We may call them respectively, the law of determination and the law of freedom. As the Quran says, 'the two (*i.e.* the two laws) are separated by an inviolable boundary' (55 : 21). Their spheres lie apart. There is no occasion for a conflict between them. The law of *Taqdir* has its own orbit and the law of *Tadbir* its own. Events and incidents ordained under *Taqdir* are inevitable and inescapable. No *Tadbir* or action undertaken by a free human being can change the course of *Taqdir*. Similarly in matters in which human beings are free to act as they like, to look up to *Taqdir* or to rely upon it,

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is the surest way to self-destruction. Our position then is quite clear. When people try to project on to God and His eternally ordained laws their own evil deeds, their laziness, their omissions and commissions, it is then that we raise our voice of protest. What we are free to do is our concern and our affair. Whatever God has left to us is our responsibility. To fail to discharge this responsibility and to attribute the consequence of our failure to *Taqdir* is wrong and unjust. So we think it wrong for Muslims to sit idle, to do nothing for their amelioration, and yet trust God and His *Taqdir* to look after their affairs. Muslims have suffered far too much for this wrong conception of *Taqdir*. They have relied on it too long. The result is they first lost their faith, and they now stand threatened with the loss of all the fortunes of this world. Had Muslims remembered that

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Taqdir and *Tadbir* are two separate universes, one the concern of God, the other their own concern, they would not have suffered to the extent to which they have.

JEHAD ?

One very widespread misunderstanding about Ahmadis is that they are deniers of *Jehad*. This is not true at all. Ahmadis do not deny *Jehad*. Ahmadis only believe that wars are of two kinds: wars which have the status of *Jehad* and wars which are just wars. A war of the status of *Jehad* is one which is undertaken in the defence of religion against an enemy who is out to destroy religion by force or who seeks to change a people's beliefs at the point of the sword. Whenever conditions amounting to this appear in any part of the world, it becomes the duty of every Muslim to join *Jehad* which is war in defence of religion. But

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such a war or *Jehad* has one important condition. It is that the declaration of *Jehad* must be made by the head of the believers. Unless responsibility for the declaration of *Jehad* vests in the head, Muslims will not know when, where and how the duty of *Jehad* is to be pursued. There will have to be a division of duties, and selection of personnel for the solemn and successful undertaking of *Jehad*. Without responsible leadership and without organised effort, *Jehad* would be next to useless. If conditions requiring *Jehad* arise and there is no responsible leadership, then every Muslim who keeps out will be a sinner. If, however, a responsible leader and head of all believers exists, only those Muslims will be answerable who refuse to undertake the duties assigned to them. When Ahmadis belonging to any

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country have denied the duty of *Jehad* they have only meant that *Jehad* was not indicated under their circumstances. A *Jehad* against the British, for instance, was not indicated as long as the British did not force people to change their religion. If the British or any other people were to try and force a change of religion, then certainly *Jehad* would be indicated. If, as is said, *Jehad* was ever indicated against the British, did Muslims join it? If they did not, what would be their reply to God? The Ahmadiyya reply is clear. They would say to God, they did not think the duty of *Jehad* had become evident; if they were in error, the error was in their judgment, not in their action. But the Maulvis who have ever accused Ahmadis of denial of *Jehad*—what will they say? Will they turn to God and say, 'true, it was time for *Jehad*. To take up arms

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against the enemy was our sacred duty. We knew that *Jehad* had become obligatory. Nevertheless, O God, we did not join *Jehad* because our hearts were full of fear. Nor did we invite to *Jehad* those with stronger hearts, because we were afraid that even this would displease the British and lead to our discomfiture'! Of the two answers which one would be more acceptable to God and more reasonable in His eyes?

I have so far tried to dispel the misunderstandings of those who know very little about Ahmadiyyat, whose knowledge of it, in fact, depends on what they hear from its antagonists, but who are still eager to know the truth about Ahmadiyyat, without having to undertake any elaborate study of their own. I now wish to turn to those who have made some study of our beliefs, and feel sure that Ahmadis believe in

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the oneness of God, the Message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Quran, the Hadith and all the ordinances of Islam relating to institutional and other prayers, the fasts, the haj, and the judgment day with all that it entails. The question they seem to ask is : Why have Ahmadis, who are like other Muslims in every respect, nevertheless organised themselves into a new sect, a new movement, a new Jamaat? The beliefs and actions of Ahmadis are not in question : it is the making of a new Jamaat or a new organisation. If Ahmadis do not differ from ordinary Muslims in any important religious belief or any important conception of religious duty, why have they constituted themselves into a separate party? If there is no serious difference, why insist on separate existence?

A NEW JAMAAT ?

This is an important question and can be answered in two ways. We may

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deal with it superficially, pointing to the advantages which accrue to Islam and Muslims through a separate organisation such as Ahmadiyyat is. On the other hand, we may deal with it more profoundly, starting with the purpose of God in sending religious teachers and raising religious communities. To deal with the question in a superficial manner, I would say that a Jamaat is not made by numbers. Individuls, large or small in number, do not become a Jamaat (or organised group) until they are united by some purpose, and until they have resolved to work together for that purpose in accordance with some plan or programme. When we have a body of individuals united in some purpose, then, however small their number, we have a Jamaat. Individuals not united in purpose and not bound together by any plan of action, may be called a herd, a crowd, a people, but not a Jamaat.

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On the day on which the Holy Prophet announced his claim to prophethood, only four believers collected around him. He himself was the fifth. They were only five, but the five constituted a Jamaat. The rest of Mecca with a population of 8,000 to 10,000 souls was not a Jamaat, nor was the rest of Arabia. The rest of Arabia was not united by any purpose. If it had a purpose, it had no programme or plan for its achievement. It is, therefore, necessary for us to see whether Muslims today have any purpose which binds them together, and which they are determined to pursue through concerted action. I agree that there is a great deal of mutual sympathy and goodwill among Muslims to-day. It would be a mistake, however, to exaggerate this. Mutual sympathy and goodwill are not an unfailing feature of Muslims all over the world. Some Muslims have

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sympathy for some other Muslims, but all Muslims cannot be said to have sympathy for one another. Nor have we any means or machinery for the liquidation of differences among Muslims. Differences and disagreements may arise even among members of a Jamaat. C o m m u n i t i e s founded by prophets can have disagreements and differences, and that in the life-time of their founders. In the time of the Holy P r o p h e t, the Ansar and the Muhajirin disagreed on several occasions. Disagreements also arose, between tribes and tribes. But these disagreements were taken to the H o l y P r o p h e t who judged between them and the disagreements were over. The same thing happened in the time of the early Khalifas. Whenever disagreements arose they were settled by the Khalifas and after their decisions or awards no disagreements r e m a i n e d.

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Even after the time of the early Khalifas—for about 70 years—Muslims remained under one Government and were loyal to one State. Whether that State was good or bad, it certainly performed the functions of uniting Muslims in one purpose ; it provided the means of liquidating their differences. Then dissensions appeared and Muslims became the centre of groups. Spain became the centre of one group and this was divided against the rest of the Muslim world. Even these dissension and differences, however, did not go beyond a certain point. The greater part of the Muslim world was still united and under one organisation. But 300 years after the advent of Islam, this organisation became utterly disintegrated. Discord, decay and dissolution became the order of the day. The Muslim world became fragmented. Truly did the Holy Prophet

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depict this state of affairs. Said he*; 'The first one hundred years of Islam are the best, then the second one hundred, and then the third. Thereafter, truth will disappear. Cruelty, excesses, differences will make their appearance. And so it has come to pass. Differences have mounted so high that during the last 300 years Muslims have lost all their old cohesion and power. There was a time when the whole of Europe lived in fear of Muslim monarchs. But now the entire Muslim world is unable to stand against a single European or American power. The Jews have set up an insignificant State in Palestine. The armies of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Palestine are fighting this State and yet the position is that the Jews have taken into possession an area far larger than the area which the United Nations had

*Mishkat, Kitab-al-Fitan.

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promised to let them have. There is no doubt that this Jewish State is supported by America and England. But this is just the point. The time has gone by when a single Muslim State could dominate the whole of Europe. The time has come when a single European State is able to dominate the whole of the Muslim world.

The true conception of Jamaat, in short, does not apply to Muslims to-day. It does not apply even to a section of Muslims. There are Muslim States, and the largest among them, Pakistan has been established recently. But Islam is not Pakistan, nor Egypt, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, or Saudi Arabia. Islam is a symbol of unity, a unity which embraces all Muslims. No such unity or organisation exists. Pakistan has sympathy for Afghanistan and Afghanistan has sympathy for Pakistan,

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but neither Pakistan nor Afghanistan is prepared to see eye to eye with the other in every matter. Their foreign policies are different and in their internal affairs they are free to do as they please. The same is true of individual Muslims. The inhabitants of Afghanistan are free in their own way. So are the inhabitants of Pakistan and the inhabitants of Egypt. There is nothing to unite the individual Muslims of these lands into one common bond. Therefore, we have to-day Muslims and Muslim States. Some of these States are also gathering strength and this is because of the grace and mercy of God. But still, Muslims cannot be described as a Jamaat. Muslim states stand for different political policies and, therefore, remain separate. There is nothing to unite them into a single policy and a single world force, nothing to unite separate voices into a single

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powerful voice, the voice of Islam. We must remember that Islam is not a sectional policy, nor is it the name of any one State. Islam is not represented by the Muslims of Arabia or Syria or Iran or Afghanistan. When and if Muslims of the world become united in the name of Islam, only then can we have a Muslim Jamaat. It will be a Jamaat uniting the different sections of Muslims into one world community. Until such a Jamaat emerges in the world, we have to admit that Muslims are not a Jamaat. They may be so many States and political policies. They cannot be said to be a Jamaat. What is true of Muslim organisations is true also of Muslim programmes or plans. There is no world organisation uniting Muslims into one community. Nor is there a general programme or plan, social, political or religious, which may be said to be the common objective of Muslims all over

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the world. In their individual capacity Muslims here and there offer resistance to the enemies of Islam and try to promote the interests of their faith. But individual effort is very different from united effort on a world scale, under a world organisation. Only such an organisation could keep a vigilant eye upon the enemies of Islam all over the world and plan for their defeat. Muslims, therefore, do not constitute a Jamaat even in the sense of a common programme. If in the midst of such a situation there springs up a Jamaat with the two-fold object of uniting Muslims and giving them a common programme, nobody can describe this Jamaat as an innovation or as a separatist movement. The truth would be the other way about. It would be more correct to say that Muslims were without a Jamaat, but came to have one in Ahmadiyyat. I invite all to consider this point, all those who

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ask why Ahmadis, who believe in the same Namaz, the same Qibla, the same Quran and the same Prophet have yet constituted themselves into a separate Jamaat. I ask them, has not the time come to reunite Muslims into one Jamaat, to give them one programme ? How long must we wait for this ? Egypt pursues her own programme, Iran her own and Afghanistan her own. Every Muslim State pursues her own programme. But while these Muslim States pursue their respective programmes and policies, a big gap remains in the Muslim world as a whole. It is this gap which the Ahmadiyya Movement has come to fill. It is said that when the Turks dissolved the Turkish Khilafat, some ulema of Egypt (according to some, under the inspiration of the Egyptian King) started a movement for the installation of an Egyptian Khilafat. Their design was to establish the King

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of Egypt as the Khalifa of all Muslims and thus promote Egypt to a position of superiority over other Muslim States. Saudi Arabia set herself against this movement and described the whole movement as a British plan. The Saudis also said that if anybody deserved to be Khalifa, it was the Saudi King. Now the institution of Khilafat can certainly unite all Muslims. But experience shows that when this institution becomes linked with an individual ruler or State, it excites the jealousy and opposition of other rulers or States. They scent trouble in any such move and do everything they can to defeat it. If, however, a movement to unite Muslims is initiated by common Muslims and if such a movement is inspired by religious motives, it will excite no political or racial jealousies. It may excite sectarian rivalries. If such a movement excites political

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jealousies, it will have to confine itself to the State which chooses to favour it. Sectarian rivalries, however, will not prevent such a movement from spreading to other countries. It will spread across political frontiers and take root not only in different Muslim countries but also in countries which are not under any Muslim rule. Such a movement will not be under political suspicion. It will not be resisted by the States of the world, not at least in its early days. The history of Ahmadiyyat is witness to this. Ahmadiyyat arose as a movement for uniting Muslims. It did not seek political power. It had no political objectives. Occasionally even the British in countries under their rule have persecuted Ahmadiyyat and put Ahmadis to trouble. But because of the purely religious character of the movement, they have never felt the need of coming into open conflict with it. To appease

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fanatic Mullahs, Afghan Kings have treated Ahmadis with cruelty. But at private meetings they have always been apologetic about their actions and have expressed regret for them. So in other Muslim countries, the masses have opposed Ahmadiyyat, the *Ulema* have opposed it and, under their pressure, state authorities have sometimes put difficulties in its way. But nobody has ever thought Ahmadiyyat to be a dangerous movement liable to upset any established State; and this is quite true. Ahmadiyyat has nothing to do with politics. Ahmadiyyat has only one thing in view and that is to improve the religious life and faith of Muslims, to unite them so as to enable them to put up a united moral and spiritual front against the enemies of Islam. With this intent and this objective, Ahmadiyya missionaries have gone to different parts of the world. When they went to

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America, the Americans opposed them, but only to the extent to which Americans would oppose all Asiatics. As far as the religious part of Ahmadiyya work was concerned, the Americans offered no resistance. They thought they could ignore it. The Dutch rulers in Indonesia treated Ahmadi missionaries in the same way. When they saw that Ahmadis did not interfere in the political affairs of the Dutch, they decided not to oppose them. They may have kept watch over them and shown studied indifference to them, but no open hostility. In such an attitude they were quite right. We were opposed to their religion and preached against it. We could expect no sympathy from them. But we did not interfere in their politics. So they had no right and no need to enter upon any visible conflict with us. The result of this has been that Ahmadiyyat has its votaries in almost every country : in India, Afghanistan,

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Iran. Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, England, United States, Indonesia, Malaya, East and West Africa, Abyssinia and Argentina. In every one of these countries Ahmadis are to be found in large numbers or small. They are the original inhabitants of these countries, not Indians or Punjabis living there who have become Ahmadis. Some of them are so sincere that they have consecrated their lives to the service of Islam. An English lieutenant, having taken a vow to spend the rest of his life in preaching Islam, is now working as a Muslim missionary. He is regular in his daily prayers. He shuns drink. He works and earns and then spends on leaflets and meetings. The allowance we are able to give him is less than the income of the meanest labourer in England. Similarly, a German, an ex-army officer, who has become Ahmadi, has succeeded in escaping from

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Germany. We have heard that he has reached Switzerland and is trying for a visa to Ahmadiyya Centre to receive instruction in Islam and then to devote himself to its service. This young German is full of genuine zeal. Some day he will find himself working somewhere for Islam.

Another German -- an author--and his wife are considering whether they also should not devote themselves entirely to the work of propagating Islam. May-be, they also will come to Pakistan to receive training. A young man from Holland has made up his mind to serve Islam. He also will be one of our missionaries. There is no doubt that the Ahmadiyya Jamaat is still small, but the question is whether this small Jamaat is not the only existing nucleus of a world Muslim organisation ? Are not Ahmadis laying the foundations of a movement which draws its members from

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many different countries and many different political parties. Ahmadis are working so as to unite different elements in the service of Islam. Such movements with such universalistic aims are small in the beginning, but a time comes when they become strong and powerful. They then take little time to emerge into a new fraternity, a new unity. It is obvious that if only political power is in view, there has to be a political movement. But if the ends in view are religious and ethical there has to be a religious and ethical movement. The Ahmadiyya Jamaat, therefore, steers clear of politics. If it did not do so, it would not be true to its goal.

Programmes

The other question relates to programmes. As regards this also, the Ahmadiyya Jamaat offers a united front. No other Jamaat has any programme or world-wide plan. The Ahmadiyya

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Jamaat is aware of the implications of the Christian attack on Islam and is offering resistance to it in almost every country of the world. At the present time Africa may be regarded in some respects the weakest, in other respects, the strongest part of the world. It is weak to outward appearance, but strong in its possibilities. Little wonder, Christianity has staked its all on Africa. The intentions of the Christian West with regard to Africa are now an open secret. At first only missionaries seemed interested in this continent. Then British Conservatives started taking interest in it. But now even the Labour Party has declared that the salvation of Europe lies in the prosperity and union of Africa. With such visible interest in the 'Dark Continent', Europe is also aware of the fact that the prosperity of Africa can benefit Europe only if Africa becomes Christian.

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Ahmadiyyat spotted this secret about 24 years ago and sent her missionaries to Africa. As a result of this timely action thousands of people abandoned Christianity and became Muslim. At present the best organisation of Muslims in Africa is the Ahmadiyya. Christian missionaries and workers now hesitate to confront Ahmadiyyat. In their reports they admit that the advent of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat in Africa has put an end to Christian work in that continent. Ahmadiyya missionaries went first to West Africa, but now for some years they have also been working in East Africa. The work in East Africa has only just begun, so there is not much to report about East Africa yet. But even there, Islam has started filling its ranks from erstwhile Christian ranks. It may reasonably be hoped that before long Ahmadiyya missionaries even in East Africa will have good results

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to show. The same is true of Indonesia and Malaya. Ahmadi missions have existed in these countries for quite a time. They have re-assembled the scattered ranks of Muslims, organized them and inspired them with a new spirit and a new consciousness. The U. S. A. is now the strongest of all Christian powers. There also, Ahmadi missionaries have been working for 24 years. Thousands of American citizens have become Ahmadi and they now contribute thousands of rupees to the missionary work of Islam. The figures are nothing compared with American standards and compared with what American missionaries spend in Asiatic and Muslim countries. But we can say that the battle has begun, and successes, however small, are on our side. It is Christians who become Muslim, not Muslims who become Christian. It is not meet, therefore, to ask why

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Ahmadiyyat has established a new Jamaat. The plain truth is that Ahmadiyyat has raised a Jamaat among Muslims when Muslims had no Jamaat at all. Who would deny that this is something to be admired ?

Separate Organisation

Yet again it is said that even for such ends as Ahmadiyyat seeks, it was not necessary to organize a separate Jamaat. The same ideas and the same spirit could have been infused in the general body of the Muslims of the world and the same ends achieved. But this is a misconception. When a campaign is to be launched, the person responsible for the campaign cannot go about asking all and sundry to help him and do this or that for him. He can ask only those who offer to join the campaign with him. Those who stand aside and hesitate to fall in cannot be

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asked to do anything. Unless an organisation had come into existence, Ahmadi Khalifas could not have proceeded with the A h m a d i y y a plan and programme. Whom could they have asked to come and help in the work of Islam ? Whom could they have invited to give time and money in the interests of the Muslim programme ? Would such appeals have been proper ? Would it have helped if Ahmadi Khalifas had gone to the market places and squares and stopped Muslims who passed by and asked them to do this or that for Islam ? Had they tried to do so, they would not have gone very far with their work. People busy with their affairs would have refused to spare themselves. At the most, some might have agreed and some not. But great plans are not executed in this way. When a great plan is afoot, those who are willing to carry it out have

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to organize themselves into a Jamaat, so that the leader of the Jamaat can depend upon them for his day-to-day plans. A Jamaat, therefore, was essential. Without it the work of Islam could not have been done. If, however, it is said that we might have had a Jamaat, but could still have mixed with other Muslims as though no differences existed between them and us, the reply is that this also was impossible. Work for Islam today entails great hardship, unselfishness and even danger to life. It entails sacrifices of a high order. Where can we find the men who would undertake such sacrifices? Yet they have to be found and trained, and they have to have a high morale. It is, therefore, necessary to separate those who would undertake the necessary sacrifices from those who have not made up their minds to do so. Unless this is done, unless the workers of Islam are separated

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to some extent and trained to a certain standard of simplicity, seriousness and self-denial, the work of Islam cannot proceed. The danger of regression into the old sloth and the old lack of seriousness is ever present. Isolation of such workers from others also promotes curiosity about the workers and their work. People begin to ask why they believe, live and behave as they do? This curiosity takes others nearer to the workers. May-be, on being convinced of the truth and value of their principles, plarr and programe, they decide to join the workers. Old hostility or indifference becomes converted into love and alliance. In short, doubts and difficulties on this subject come of insufficient thought. If sufficient thought is given to the whole matter it should not be difficult to see that the Ahmadiyya stand is correct. Only by adopting this stand can Ahmadiyyat

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promote a movement for Islam, and enlist self-sacrificing individuals in its support. If Ahmadiyyat continues in this policy, it will continue to enlarge its circle of supporters, until the time comes when unbelief will realise that Islam has beome strong again. Then will unbelief attack Islam again with all its might. But the time of attack will have passed away. Islam will hold the field and unbelief will suffer defeat. Those who work for the plitical prosperity of Islam have our good wishes. We do not stand in their way. We only say to them 'You go your way, and we go ours. Let us not obstruct one another. Let us give everybody the freedom to choose his method of serving Islam. Let everybody feel free to join whichever side he chooses. Let him join the political workers or let him join us'. No doubt, in the political field one can attain to much fame with

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little sacrifice. In our field of work one can attain only too little fame in spite of much sacrifice. But political workers will reap the reward of their labour and we will reap the raward of our labour. Those who value the renais-, sance of Islam in an ultimate sense, those who would wish to make this renaissance a reality, will join our ranks. Those who value political power will join the political workers. But the two have no cause for quarrel. Both desire the welfare of Islam. Both grieve over its present plight. Only, they are affected by it in different ways. May-be it is mind in one case, and hearts in the other, which feel the anguish.

Spiritual Approach

So far I have discussed the *raison d'etre* of Ahmadiyyat from a common-sense point of view. Commonsense sees things largely on the surface. But there is another point of view : the

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spiritual point of view which goes deeper and which, in my view, is the only real point of view. I propose, therefore, to look at the subject now from the spiritual point of view.

And eternal law of God ordains that when evil abounds in the world, when spiritual ends become forgotten and people generally come to attach more importance to worldly ends than to things of the spirit, God raises from amongst His servants those who guide His creatures back to the straight path. Through them, God seeks to reestablish the faith that is gone. Such divinely appointed guides bring different messages at different times. At times they promulgate laws about right and wrong. At other times they promulgate no law and teach nothing new. They only guide a people back to an old law and an old teaching. This eternal law is the central theme of the Holy

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Quran. God turns to it again and again in the holy books and reminds mankind of the mercy and grace which the coming of divine teachers embodies and the recognition of which is an elementary duty of all human beings.

There is no doubt that God is High and Mighty and man, in comparison, is low and feeble. Yet it is true that man has been created for a high purpose. The heavens and the earth and whatever is in them have a purpose. Says the Holy Quran : 'And we have not made the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport' (44:39). A purpose runs through all creation. That purpose is that man should become a true image of God, that human beings should reproduce on a human scale the attributes and virtues of the Deity and that those among them who learn to live godly lives should show the way to others.

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From the earliest times, this has been the law of God. The being and attributes of God have manifested themselves in the lives and characters of divine teachers. They manifested themselves in Adam. Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and last and best of all in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace). The Holy Prophet reflected in his life and character, severally as well as collectively, all the divine attributes. The reflexion of divine attributes in the life of the Holy Prophet was so perfect that if other prophets are like stars on the spiritual firmament, the Holy Prophet is like the sun. The Holy Prophet gave to the world the last divine law. He was the last law-giver sent by God to man, and no law-giving prophet was to come after him. It was not due to divine favouritism. It was **because** the law which the Holy Prophet

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brought from God to man was so comprehensive and complete that another version of the divine law was not required. In the revelation of the Quran and in the life and example of the Prophet, God fulfilled His promise and His purpose. There was, however, no guarantee that men would continue to do their duty, that, having learnt this perfect law once, they would remain steadfast in its observance and loyal to its memory for ever afterwards. The Holy Quran teaches that the contrary was to be expected. Says the Quran :—

> 'He it is who plans the Command from the heaven to the earth; and then it rises towards Him in a day the length of which is a thousand years according to your rockoning' (82:6).

The verse first describes the coming of Islam. It then tells us how Islam was to become established and

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what was due to happen later on. It says that Islam, the last law taught by God to man, would become established in the world under a divine design. The hostility of its enemies would be of no avail. But after a time it would begin, as it were, to ascend back to heaven and in 1,000 years would have disappeared from the world again. Three hundred years is the Prophet's own round estimate of the time during which Islam was to become established in the world. I have cited above the Hadith on this point. The Holy Quran, through the symbols Alif, Lam, Mim, Ra (Surah 13). puts it down as 271 years. If we add 271 to 1,000 we have the exact date by which the spirit of Islam was to disappear from the world. It was to be the year 1271 according to the Hijri calendar. roughly the end of the 13th century. The eternal law of God, however, is that

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every time mankind regresses into doubt and disbelief, God sends down a messenger to save mankind from irretrievable degradation and to reassert His sovereignty over man and the world. It was inevitable, therefore, that a messenger of God should appear in our time and address us in His name. This messenger could have been anybody, but his coming was certain, for God has ever guided His creatures. When the followers of Adam went astray He guided them. When the followers of Noah, Abraham, Moses or Jesus went wrong, He guided them. It is inconceivable that when the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad lose the old faith and become corrupt in thought and deed, He should do nothing. The followers of the Holy Prophet were promised something more. They were to have guides from heaven in the beginning of every century,—the

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Mujaddids or Restorers who were to restore the faith of Islam at intervals of 100 years. They were to rise from time to time and meet the minor crises of Islam. The history of Islam records the names of these Mujaddids or Restorers. They appeared in accordance with the Prophet's tradition which says :

> Verily, God will raise for this people, at the head of every 100 years, one who will restore for them, their faith' (Abu Daud Vol. II, p. 241).

It does not stand to reason that Islam should have had guides from heaven to meet its minor crises, but no one to meet its major crisis of to-day. This major crisis of Islam was also foretold. According to the Holy Prophet it had been foretold by prophet after prophet from times immemorial. It is incomprehensible that, to meet their major crisis, Muslims

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should have no messenger, no guide from heaven, no one to call them back to the old faith and lead them out of the darkness and degradation into which they have fallen. Are we to say that the beneficence of God which brought grace and guidance to the followers of earlier prophets was to be denied to the followers of the Holy Prophet ? No. The old beneficence, the old grace and guidance should come manifold to the followers of the Prophet. There is nothing more certain and unequivocal than that both the Quran and the Hadith promise that whenever the followers of the Holy Prophet fall into evil, they will have Someone to guide them out of it. This promise relates especially to our time. Ours is the time of the Dajjal (the anti-Christ), of the ascendancy of Christianity and of the apparent defeat of Islam and the enslavement of Muslims to the

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canons and customs of other nations and other peoples. In our time was to appear a Restorer and Guide in complete likeness to the Holy Prophet. This was the Restorer appointed to inspire our age and and resuscitate Islam in our time. Ours is the time described by the Prophet as the time 'in which nothing will be left of Islam except its name and of the Quran, nothing except its text' (Mishkat, Kitab al-Ilm).

Therefore, friends, the Ahmadiyya Movement only fulfils an eternal law. It fulfils prophecies and promises made by the Holy Prophet himself and by prophets before him. If the Founder of the Movement has not proved worthy of his office, the fault cannot be his. The office was not of his choosing. But if God is the Knower of the Unseen, if there is nothing hidden from His view, and if all His acts are full of wisdom, then you may be sure that the choice of

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Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (on whom be peace) was the only correct choice. Muslims and the world can be delivered only through him. He has brought no new message. It is the message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad which the world had all but forgotten. It is the message of the Quran from which the world had all but turned away. And what is this message? That the universe and man owe themselves to a Creator, that the Creator created man, so that man should love Him, imitate His perfect attributes and reproduce them on a human scale. Says the Quran :

> And when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am certainly going to create a vicegerent in this earth' (2 : 31).

The verse describes the creation of Adam, the progenitor of the human race. It lays down clearly that man is the Khalifa of God, His vicegerent

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and bearer of His attributes. It sets forth the purpose of God in the creation of man and the Islamic conception of man's duty. Man's duty is to reproduce on a human scale the beautiful attributes of God. This is impossible unless man turns to God again and again and ask for His help and guidance at every step ; unless by devotion and sacrifice man makes himself worthy of the sacred trust which God has placed in his hands; unless man seeks the support and sustenance of God in everything he undertakes; and unless he learns to rely on God in everything. This is the ever-lasting message, to fulfil which, the Promised Messiah came into the world. He came to draw away mankind from excessive worldliness and lead them back to their duty to God. He came to recreate faith in Islam and to reinstate the Holy Prophet in the hearts of Muslims. Had not satanic powers with-

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in and without nearly banished him ?

The first step which the Promised Messiah took to fulfil this mission was to remind Muslims of the important distinction between the shell and the kernel, between the externals of a faith and its substance and spirit. He insisted on the importance of externals but said that the spirit was even more important. Without a genuine inwardness, true human advance was impossible. He founded a Jamaat every entrant into which, while declaring his faith, had to declare, 'I will hold my religion above all worldly considerations.' 'Faith above world,' therefore, became the slogan of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat. The message came in time. The disease Muslims suffered from was just this lack of faith. Worldly greatness had slipped out of their hands; still they craved only for things of the world. The advance of Islam meant in their eyes, the advance of Muslim

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education, Muslim industry, Muslim commerce, Muslim politics. These ideals are far from the ideal which the Holy Prophet had in view. The Prophet was not interested in the promotion of a community which called itself Muslim. He would not have been happy if more and more persons called themselves Muslims. He was interested in real Muslims. A real Muslim, according to the Quran, has 'his face ever turned towards God' (2:113). Such a Muslim lives for God. His own aims and ambitions and whatever he cares for in the world, are subordinated to the needs and requirements of religion. The subordination of worldly needs to the needs of religion seems a simple matter but it constitutes an important point of difference between Islam and other religions. Islam does not forbid us to strive for political prosperity. But Islam does require us to be different from others.

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Human effort is of two kinds. One aims at the shell through the kernel. The other aims at the kernel through the shell. Those who aim at the kernel through the shell may or may not succeed. More often than not, they fail. But those who aim at the shell through the kernel obtain the shell as well as the kernel. The Holy Prophet and his early followers were devoted entirely to religion, but they did not fail to achieve worldly greatness. It is but natural that those who achieve religion should also achieve the world. But those who achieve the world may not achieve religion. Those who seek the world often lose their religion. They plan to find religion after they have found the world, but in the attempt lose whatever religion they have. Accordingly, the Promised Messiah (following the example of the Holy Prophet) invited people to faith and did so in the name of God. There were

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two movements in the promised Messiah's time. One said, 'We Muslims have become weak, let us ask for political power and make ourselves strong.' The other was the movement initiated by the Promised Messiah which said, 'Let us work for religion, God will take care of the world.'

Some have wrongly taken the Ahmadiyya Movement for yet another Sufistic order. There are Sufis who lay great stress on prayers and fasting. They send their followers into cloisters and behind walls. Excessive worship makes them useless for anything else. The Promised Messiah did nothing of the kind. Had he done so, he would have been one of those who promise a kernel but present a shell. He insisted on true religion and on the true function of true religion. True religion sharpens our intellect and illumines our understanding. True religion, truly, cultivated, raises our moral

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level, improves our capacity for action and creates in us a spirit of self-sacrifice. The promised Messiah invited people to true religion. He insisted on religious practices. But the prayers, fasts, Zakat and Haj to which he invited were those taught by the Quran. The religious practices taught by the Quran are not physical experiences. Fasts laid down by the Quran are not feats of physical endurance. Zakat is not to lose money in sport. Haj is not an exercise in difficult travel. According to the Quran, 'prayer teaches you to abjure all indecencies and prohibitions' (29 : 46). If our prayers do not result in the banishment of indecencies and prohibitions, they are not prayers in the true sense. Similarly fasts (2 : 184) are meant to purify us and to raise our moral standards. If we fast but the fasting does not produce the results which it should, we may be sure that we have been fasting in the

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wrong way or with wrong motives. Perhaps we have only been learning to endure hunger and thirst. God does not care for this sort of fasting. The function of Haj, according to the Quran, is to cure disunion, to stop corruption and conflicts. The end of Zakat, according to the Quran [9 : 103], is the purification of individual and social life and the cleansing of emotions and thoughts. Those who do not achieve these results do not practise the Zakat taught by the Quran. The Quran will not stamp our prayers, fasts, Zakat and Haj as correct unless they lead to the banishment of indecencies, make us God-fearing, cure us of disunion, and purify our individual and social life and our thoughts and feelings. The Promised Messiah, accordingly, declared that if Ahmadis did not achieve the results which the teachings of the Quran were meant to achieve, he would not regard

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them as true Ahmadis. Such Ahmadis will have missed the kernel for the shell while God values the kernel, not the shell. So in other religious practices the Promised Messiah urged the importance of the spirit rather than the form. The injunctions of Islam, he said, were rooted in wisdom, not one, which was not pregnant with meaning. God was to be seen not with the physical eye, but with a pure heart. Contact with Him was attained not through physical means but through love and devotion. Religion seeks no rule over the five senses or over the external actions of man. If it propounds rules for the five senses or for external actions, it is in order to influence the feelings thoughts and motives of man; to sharpen his intellect and purify the recesses of his heart. It is in order that man may see God, that he may come in close contact with Him and hear His voice. By

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pointing out these basic truths the Promised Messiah opened a new avenue for the advance of Islam. It was a small community which collected around him, but it was a community which valued religion more than the life of this world and prepared itself for all manner of sacrifice for the advance of Islam and for the establishment of the spiritual dominion of the Holy Prophet. There is a moral in this. Ahmadis are outnumbered several thousand times by other Muslims. But the work which other Muslims are doing for the propagation and promotion of Islam is not even a quarter of what Ahmadis are doing. Why this large difference? Obviously because the Promised Messiah (on whome be peace) taught Ahmadis to hold religion above everything else. As soon as Ahmadis learnt the meaning and value of this truth, their religious practices and their daily lives became different. The

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prayer of a true Ahmadi is very different from the prayer of an ordinary Muslim. The outward form is the same. The prayers and invocations used are the same, but the soul and substance are quite different. When an Ahmadi engages in Namaz, he has his eye on its real purpose. His Namaz is a means of promoting his contact with God. If it is asked, Do not others say their Namaz with the same intent ?', my reply is 'Certainly not' If stock is taken of the beliefs which have been advocated among Muslims for some time, it would be found that Muslims as a body have come to hold, that direct contact with God is no longer possible. They hold that the Voice of God can be heard no more, nor can man beseech God and implore Him successfully for a change in the course of events. For over one hundred years now Muslims have denied the possibility of divine revelation. Before this, Muslims

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believed that revelation was possible. Some of them even claimed that they received such revelation. But now for over one hundred years Muslims have become reconciled to a complete denial of the continuity of revelation. Some Muslim authorities have condemned belief in the continuity of revelation as Kufr. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) claimed that not only he himself but even those who followed him truly and ordered their lives in accordance with his advice and instructions would hear the voice of God. He published his revelations as often as he received them and encouraged his followers to seek this gift from God. Did not Muslims implore God five times a day saying. 'God, show us the straight path, the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings'? What does this prayer—repeated so often in the course of a

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single day by every Muslim—mean ? What after all does it seek ? certainly the blessings which in the past God has bestowed on those who sought, deserved and found His favours. Among these blessings is the gift of prophecy. The blessed ones of God, therefore, include the prophets. Unless this prayer was meant to be wasted, it is impossible that not a single Muslim should attain to that nearness to God which has been enjoyed by innumerable prophets before. Pointing this out, the Promised Messiah cured the depression and despondency which had overtaken all Muslims. Not every Ahmadi, however, but certainly every Ahmadi who has acquired insight into the meaning and purpose of the advent of the Promised Messiah, observes Namaz, not as a dead routine, but as an occasion to seek and receive the grace of God. Such an Ahmadi engages in Namaz to

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improve and deepen his relationship with God. Namaz observed in this way and with this intent cannot but be very different from ordinary Namaz. So much did the Promised Messiah stress the possibility of direct relationship with God that he invited all inquirers to test his own claim by prayers addressed directly to God. He believed that God had shown many signs in support of his claim. But he said, it was not necessary, to reply on those signs. If men had no time to ponder over those signs ; or if they thought there was no need to do so, or if they thought they could not rely on their own judgement ; then the way was open to them to address their solicitations direct to God and ask Him to lead them in the matter of the claims of the Promised Messiah. If his claims were true, they should ask God to lead them towards him. If they were false they should ask God to turn them away

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from him. The Promised Messiah proclaimed that this method of prayer for testing his claim was open to every-one. If one prayed continuously for some time for the direction of God in this matter he was certain to reach the truth. Hundreds and thousands of Ahmadis have entered the Ahmadiyya fold on receiving some light or direction from God in answer to their prayers It is an unfailing instrument. We can make mistakes in argument or observation. But God can make no mistakes in His directions to human beings. And how great is the certainty of faith in the truth of his claims which the Promised Messiah has shown in this invitation to all and sundry to test his claims by an appeal to God. Can a pre-tender issue such an invitation ? Can such a person ask people to go and ask God about him and his claims ? Can a pretender expect God's decision to go in

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his favour ? A pretender inviting people to such a test issues his own death warrant. The Promised Messiah issued this invitation again and again. He said he had thonsands of signs to show in his support, but if these were not enough he invited people to hear neither him nor his enemies, but to pray directly to God and hear what He had to say on the question of his claims. Should God pronounce him a pretender, he was nothing else. But should God pronounce him true, why hesitate to believe ?

Friends, how straight and simple was this method of testing the claims of the Promised Messiah ! Thousands of persons benefited from it. The method can be adopted even now by those who waver over the question. The Promised Messiah's reliance on this method of prayer was evidence, again, of his general attitude towards religion.

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He held religion above other things. We had the means, he said, to settle disputes and disagreements about material things : the five senses, the capacity to judge and infer. We also had the sun and the stars to guide us in our knowledge of physical things. Was it possible there should be no means to know the truth in spiritual matters, no light to guide the spirit when it was surrounded by darkness all around ? God's own teaching was unmistakable on the point. According to it, God was ever willing to show the way to those who toiled in search of spiritual truths. Says God in the Quran :

> 'Those who toil in their search for Us, We surely show them the way to Ourselves' (29 : 70)

In short 'Religion First' was the principle which the Promised Messiah sought to inculcate in both his followers

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and his opponents. For his followers, it was to be a rule of life. For others, it was to serve as an instrument for testing the truth of his claims. Our God is a living God. The realm both of ature and of Spirit are under His sovereignty. A believer's duty is to cultivate as close a relation with God as he can and come as near to Him as is possible. He who is without guidance must seek guidance from Him and reach the truth with His help. The message of the Promised Messiah for this age is that mankind has to find God again and having found God, to re-form itself to His liking. To those who seem to despair, the Promised Messiah brings the certain expectation of meeting God.

Friends, read the holy books. Read the history of your own fore-fathers. Were their lives consecrated to material ends? Did they rely only on

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material means ? Were they not engrossed day and night in a search for God and for the means to please Him ? And many of them found the object of their search, And when they did, they witnessed signs and miracles and other evidences of a living God. This was what distinguished early Muslims from other peoples and other nations. But what is there to distinguish Muslims of today from Hindus, Christians and others ? If there is nothing very much to distinguish Muslims of today from other religious communities, then what use is Islam to Muslims ? The truth, however, is that such a distinction exists. But Muslims have lost sight of it. The distinction is that Islam alone holds up the gift of revelation as God's enduring gift to man. Islam alone teaches that man can ever have direct access to God. The spiritual grace of the Holy Prophet has

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just this meaning. It does not mean that Muslims should keep advancing in education, industry or commerce. For, non-Muslims keep doing so no less. The spiritual grace of the Holy Prophet of Islam means that Muslims who follow the Holy Prophet can have direct access to God; that through this access man can see God with his mind, heart and soul and be at one with Him; that he can hear His sweet voice and show signs in evidence of his contact with Him. This is the gift which only the followers of the Prophet can receive and this is the gift which distinguishes Muslims from non-Muslims. This is the distinction of Islam which Muslims had all but forgotten and to which the Promised Messiah drew their attention He received the gift of revelation as a follower of the Holy Prophet, and he confronted his detractors with this simple fact. The gift of revelation long

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denied to the world had been received by him, he said, through the grace of the Holy Prophet. There are many things which the Promised Messiah said or did, and they are all very important and far-reaching; but, compared with this central contribution of his to Islam, they must count as small and secondary His central contribution was that he initiated a movement to persuade people to hold religion above all things, and to prefer spiritual ends and means to material ends and means. The future of Islam is bound up with this realization. We must learn to regard spiritual ends and means as very much more important than physical ends and means. We must use guns in defence of the lands in which we live. Some of our enemies will yield to nothing else. But the world-wide renaissance of Islam for which we wait will not come except through the spiritual means inculcated by

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the Promised Messiah. When Muslims are Muslims, when they learn to hold religion above eveything else, when spiritual ends begin to seem more precious to them, then all the pleasures they seek in imitation of the West will disappear of themselves. They will need no pressure or persuasion to give up these pleasures. They will have no taste left for them. They will seek, instead, only serious pursuits and purposes. Their words and deeds will acquire a new power, a new appeal. Non-Muslims will imitate the ways of Muslims and not unlike the Meccan enemies of Islam. Hindus, Christians and others will begin to say 'Would, that we had been Muslims'! Not unlike the Meccans, again, their secret feelings will begin to translate themselves into open profession and visible action. They will not take long to become Muslims. Men cannot keep long away from a good thing. A

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liking for it develops into desire and desire into attraction till at last one is with the object of one's desire. The same thing will happen now. Islam will first take root in the hearts of Muslims. It will sprout forth in their own conduct and character and this non-Muslims will find difficult to resist. Then will the world become filled with Muslims and Islam.

Friends, I am constrained to be brief. I cannot argue in detail. I cannot describe the message of Ahmadiyyat in all its bearings. I have tried to present only in outline the aims and motives of Ahmadiyyat. I request you, therefore, to ponder over the contents of this address and see for yourselves whether religious movements in the past have ever prospered through earthly means. Religious movements have ever succeeded through religious means. Their weapons are inner purity and self-sacrifice. They

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attract others through precept and example. This has been the law from the time of Adam. It cannot be different now. Messages received from God have spread in the past through spiritual means. So will the Message of Islam spread in our time through spiritual means. This is what the Promised Messiah has taught on divine authority. Therefore, for the sake of your souls, for the sake of coming generations, for the sake of your near and dear ones and for the sake of your country, heed the Message of God. Turn to it attentively and try to understand it, so that the gates of divine grace may open for you sooner than they otherwise might and the pace of Islam become accelerated and not retarded. There is hard work to be done. It is for this that we await you. The purpose of God works itself out through miracles and through concerted hard work. Therefore, come

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and join us and share the burden we must carry together for the progress and propagation of Islam. The path we invite you to, is not easy. It needs sacrifice, self-denial and the ability to endure unjust accusations. But only they live in the way of God, who are willing to suffer and die. Only they find God who are ready to die for Him. Islam cannot live again unless Muslims are willing to die for it. Take courage, therefore, and hold the bitter cup to your lips. Let us make ready to die, so that Islam may live and the religion of the Prophet (on whom be peace) may become fresh and green again. If we are willing to die here, we can have ever-lasting life hereafter. Amen.

MIRZA MAHMUD AHMAD,
Imam, Jamaat Ahmadiyya

Oct. 27, 48.

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